

Stones Underhill Associates

**Proposed Housing Development  
Manadon, Plymouth**

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

**NGR SX 478 588**

Site code: AR.1998.17

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT  
May 2001

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Prepared by: Andrew. D. B. Holmes Date: 8 May 2001
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Approved by: <i>R. Williams</i> Assistant Director Date: <i>17/5/2001</i>

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

May 2001

## Proposed Housing Development, Manadon, Plymouth

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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## SUMMARY

*In May 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Manadon, Plymouth, on behalf of Stones Underhill Associates. The trenches in the evaluation did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits other than modern 20th century pipeline service trenches. Contamination provisionally interpreted as asbestos was found in parts of some of the trenches; these areas were not further investigated for health and safety reasons.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In May 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Manadon, Plymouth on behalf of Stones Underhill Associates. The evaluation was a second stage of investigation in respect of planning applications for proposed new housing (Area 5, Manadon development). The evaluation was completed according to a brief set by and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with Mike Daniels, Principal Archaeologist for Plymouth City Council. The development site is within the area of the former Royal Naval Engineering College, north of the A38 and west of the A386 (NGR SX 478 588), and is c 43 hectares in area (Fig 1). The development site is divided into numbered areas (Fig 2). Within these certain parcels of land are the subjects of specific applications to build residential housing.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on shale geology, overlain in places by clay, and lies on a hill overlooking Plymouth. The ground slopes steeply to the south, west and north, with heights ranging from 91 m to 67 m OD.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The development site is within an area of archaeological potential. In November 1997 OAU produced a Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment (OAU 1997) which identified a number of sites within the development area where there was a potential for archaeological remains. The document also set out provisional recommendations for mitigation procedures, including selected areas of trial trench evaluation for the areas of highest archaeological potential, together with building survey, to record standing earthworks and structures where they would be affected by the development.

- 1.3.2 The Desk-Based Assessment identified two features of potentially medieval origin, a 'sacred' well and a sunken lane. Also highlighted were a number of post-medieval features, including sections of the late 18th-century Devenport Leat, a bridge also of probable late 18th-century date, a number of extant water features and four listed buildings.
- 1.3.3 The report also concluded that although there were no known pre-medieval remains within the site, the topographic location and presence of a number of natural springs would have made this area extremely conducive to settlement from the prehistoric period onwards. There was therefore the potential that undisturbed areas of the site might contain previously unrecognised and unrecorded archaeological remains.
- 1.3.4 A previous archaeological evaluation was undertaken at the site in February 2000 (OAU 2000). The only noteworthy features were a 'sunken lane' and a rookery feature; a possible well was located on the basis of subsided ground deposits (OAU 2000).

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS**

- 2.1.1 To determine, as far as reasonably possible the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains likely to be threatened by the proposed redevelopment. An adequate representative sample of all areas threatened by the proposed development was proposed for investigation.
- 2.1.2 To clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion and assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.
- 2.1.3 To prepare a report on the findings which could be used to inform on the need for further archaeological mitigation and where necessary effect changes to the development design to incorporate or avoid significant archaeological remains.

## **3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Scope of fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 The evaluation comprised five 30 m x 1.65 m trenches (Fig. 3). A sixth trench was abandoned due to tree and fence obstructions and ongoing ground works. The trenching represented a *c* 5% sample of the proposed development area.

### **3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording**

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a JCB mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Where possible the trenches were machined to the top of the natural geology, to allow the full impact of the development to be examined. The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed deposits were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds.
- 3.2.2 All trenches were planned and sample sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. A colour slide and black and white print photographic record was made of the work. Recording was carried out using proforma sheets and followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (OAU, 1992).

### 3.3 Survey

- 3.3.1 Trenches were tied into the developer's pre-site survey site grid and ordnance datum (Figs 2 & 3).
- 3.3.2 Survey information was downloaded into CivilCad 5.5 and introduced to the pre-site survey AutoCAD drawing provided by the client.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The general soil type was silty-clay topsoil overlying natural clay and shale. Natural clay was observed in part of Trench 6. Ground conditions were firm and dry.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was abandoned due to its location within the canopy area of two large oak trees and because of fencing and ongoing groundwork, the area available was deemed insufficient to allow for proper evaluation trenching.

### 5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

- 5.2.1 Trench 2 was orientated east-west and measured 30 m by 1.65 m. Upon excavation it was discovered that some 17 m of Trench 2 was contaminated with large quantities of a material provisionally interpreted as asbestos, and consequently was immediately back-filled. Service pipelines were exposed every 2 m thereafter along the length of the trench, thereby preventing a full investigation within the trench.

### 5.3 *Trench 3 (Fig. 3)*

5.3.1 This trench was aligned north-south and measured 30 m by 1.65 m. A concrete service trench extended diagonally across the trench, 3 m from the south end. A length of trench 8 m long at the north end of the trench was found to be contaminated by a material provisionally interpreted as asbestos, and was immediately back-filled.

5.3.2 A clay and shale natural (33) was revealed at the base of the trench, which was overlain by a brown silty clay colluvium (32) that was 0.4 m deep and extended the length of the trench. This deposit was overlain by a grey-brown silty clay subsoil (31) that was 0.12 m deep and lay beneath a grey-brown silty clay topsoil (30) to a depth of 0.26 m.

5.3.3 No features or finds were observed within the trench.

### 5.4 *Trench 4 (Fig. 3)*

5.4.1 Trench 4 was aligned east-west, and was excavated with a slightly curved deviation to the north-east for the last 6 m, in order to avoid a concrete foundation platform. The trench measured 30 m by 1.65 m and was cut diagonally by two service trenches that were positioned 1 m and 8 m respectively from the east end of the trench.

5.4.2 The natural at the base of the trench was a clay and shale deposit (42) which was overlain by a grey-brown silty clay subsoil (41) that was 0.25 m deep. This was sealed by a grey-brown silty clay topsoil (40) that was 0.24 m deep.

### 5.5 *Trench 5 (Figs 3 & 4)*

5.5.1 Trench 5 measured 30 m by 1.65 m and was a maximum depth of 1.1 m. The trench was aligned north-south and was located on the north-sloping face of the hill. At the north end, two service trenches encased in concrete extended diagonally across the trench for a length of 9 m.

5.5.2 Clay and shale natural (53) was exposed at the base of the trench. This layer was overlain by a 0.4 m thick brown clay colluvial deposit. This was in turn sealed by a grey-brown silty clay subsoil, to a depth of 0.31 m. This lay beneath a 0.26 m deep grey-brown silty clay topsoil.

### 5.6 *Trench 6 (Figs 3 & 4)*

5.6.1 Trench 6 was aligned east-west and measured 30 m in length by 1.65 m, and was 0.85 m deep. The trench was situated on a gradual incline at the south end



of the evaluation area. Four service pipeline trenches, three in the western half and one in the eastern half of the trench, were observed.

- 5.6.2 Clay and shale natural (64) was exposed at the base of the trench. An area measuring 2 m in length of yellow clay natural (63) was identified at the west end. The natural was overlain by a brown silty clay colluvium (62) that was 0.4 m deep. This was overlain by a grey-brown silty clay subsoil (61), which was sealed by 0.1 m deep grey-brown silty clay topsoil (60).

## 5.7 **Finds**

- 5.7.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

## 5.8 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 5.8.1 No environmental samples were taken during the course of the evaluation.

## 6 **DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### 6.1 **Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 The sample size in this evaluation represents a reasonable proportion of the proposed development Area 5. Parts of the trenches were however lost due to modern contaminants.
- 6.1.2 As with all investigations of this type, the possibility remains that features cut into the natural geology may survive elsewhere in the evaluation area. Nonetheless, on the basis of this investigation, there seems little likelihood of archaeological features being present in Area 5, which clearly has seen intensive land use in recent periods.

### 6.2 **Overall interpretation**

- 6.2.1 The evaluation produced no evidence of archaeological features or deposits and was heavily truncated to the north, south and west of site by concrete encased service trenches probably associated with construction works for the M.o.D.
- 6.2.2 Although the site is in close proximity to the natural springs of Manadon Park, there was no evidence to suggest activity of any historical periods.
- 6.2.3 Colluvial or hill-wash material was noted in several of the trenches; this soil formation process was not dated.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctx No	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds
3						
	30	Deposit	30	0.19	Topsoil	-
	31	Deposit	30	0.12	Subsoil	-
	32	Deposit	30	0.41	Colluvium	-
	33	Deposit	30	-	Clay/shale natural	-
4						
	40	Deposit	30	0.24	Topsoil	-
	41	Deposit	30	0.25	Subsoil	-
	42	Deposit	30	-	Clay/shale natural	-
5						
	50	Deposit	30	0.26	Topsoil	-
	51	Deposit	30	0.31	Subsoil	-
	52	Deposit	30	0.4	Colluvium	-
	53	Deposit	30	-	Clay/shale natural	-
6						
	60	Deposit	30	0.1	Topsoil	-
	61	Deposit	30	0.28	Subsoil	-
	62	Deposit	30	0.4	Colluvium	-
	63	Deposit	2	-	Clay natural	-
	64	Deposit	28	-	Clay/shale natural	-

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

OAU 1992, *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992, Wilkinson D, ed.)

OAU 1997 *Proposed Housing Development, Manadon, Plymouth*. Desk Based Archaeological Assessment. Unpublished client report

OAU 2000 *Proposed Housing Development, Manadon, Plymouth*. Archaeological Evaluation report. Unpublished client report

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Manadon, Plymouth

**Site code:** AR.1998.17

**Grid reference:** NGR SX 478 588

**Type of evaluation:** Six 30 m by 1.65 m trenches

**Date and duration of project:** 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May 2001

**Area of site:** Area 5, Manadon housing development

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features or deposits were found, a great deal of modern contamination was found (asbestos) and numerous service pipes and service trenches

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the local museum in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

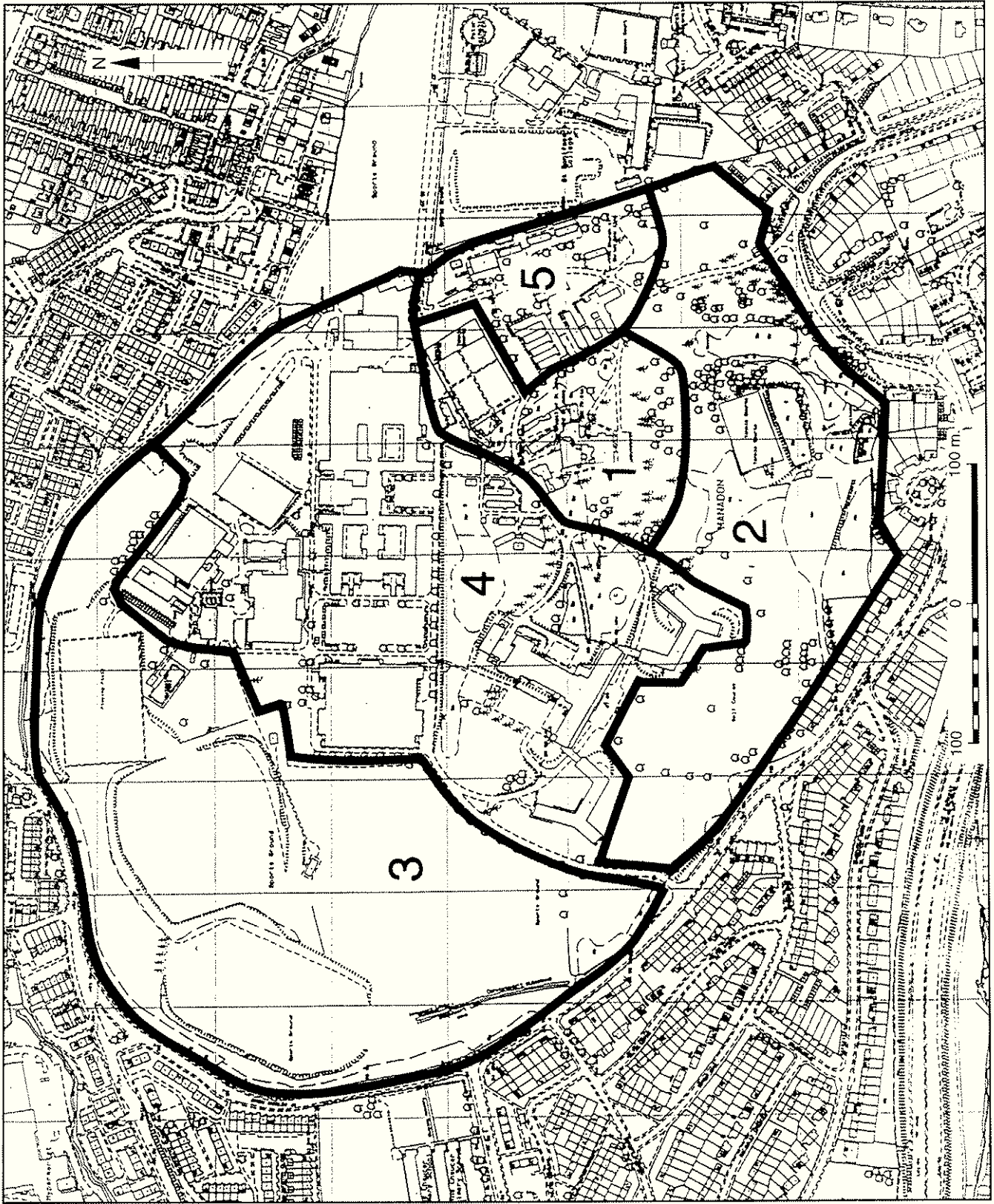


Figure 2: Development areas.



Figure 3: Trench and survey locations.

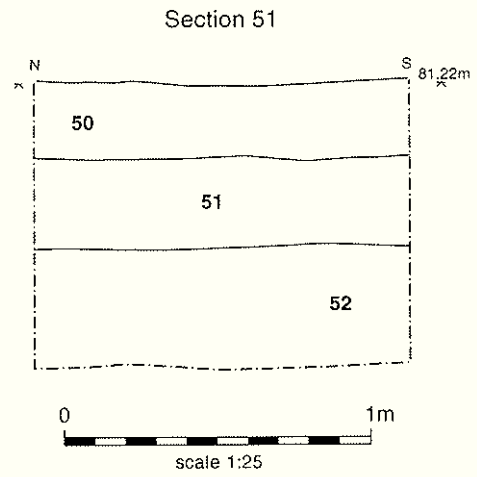
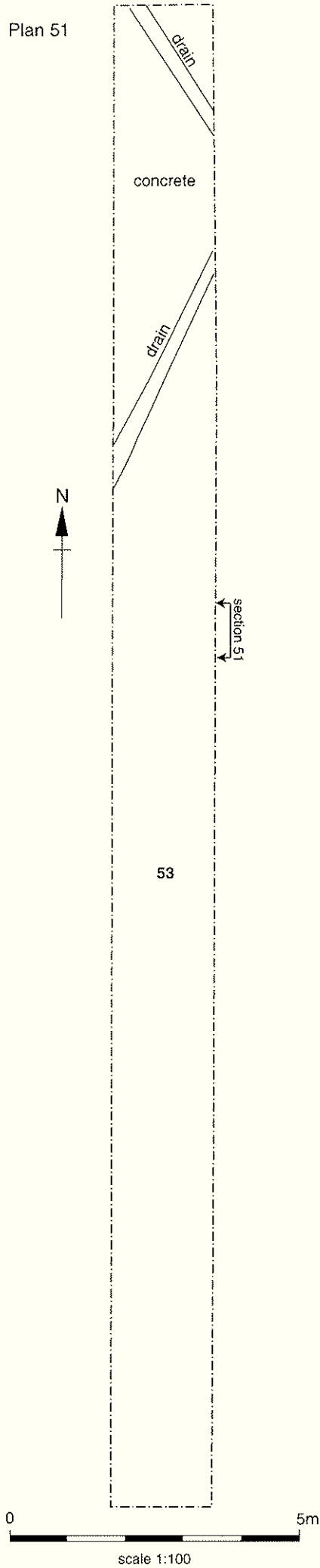


Figure 4: Trench 5, plan and section.



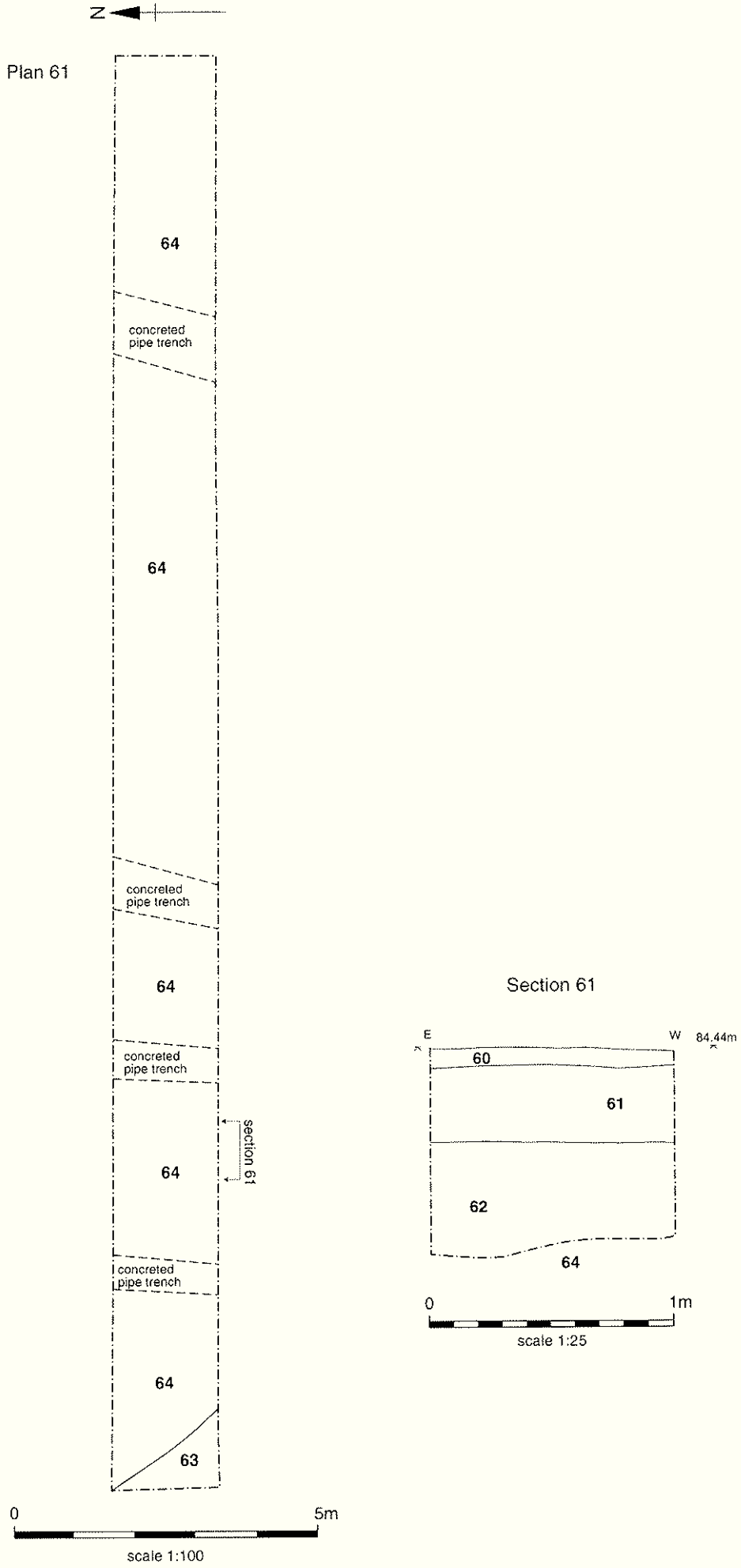


Figure 5: Trench 6, plan and section.

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